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One of the toughest challenges an operational-level commander has to face is fighting as the leader of a coalition. Political issues and interoperability problems in the operational functions (intelligence, movement and maneuver, fires, logistics, command and control, and protection) create impediments to effective coordination and communication within the coalition. The coalition area that is impacted the most is ground warfighting.

Combatant commanders faced with conducting operations under the umbrella of a coalition need to drive the joint community toward improvements in US/coalition interoperability, common doctrine and procedures, and more effective ground operations. Analyzing past problems in the operational functions and developing solutions to them will help future coalition commanders tackle the complex challenges of coalition warfighting.

Providing the combatant commanders with operational-level recommendations is part of the way ahead for improving US/coalition operations in the twenty-first century. The most important step is following through on these recommendations at both the operational and strategic levels.

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OPERATIONAL LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE COALITION
OPERATIONS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

by

Greg Boyle
LtCol   USMC

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the
requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by
the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature:_____

16 May 2003

ABSTRACT

OPERATIONAL LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE COALITION

OPERATIONS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

One of the toughest challenges an operational-level commander has to face is fighting as the leader of a coalition. Political issues and interoperability problems in the operational functions (intelligence, movement and maneuver, fires, logistics, command and control, and protection) create impediments to effective coordination and communication within the coalition. The coalition area that is impacted the most is ground warfighting.

Combatant commanders faced with conducting operations under the umbrella of a coalition need to drive the joint community toward improvements in US/coalition interoperability, common doctrine and procedures, and more effective ground operations. Analyzing past problems in the operational functions and developing solutions to them will help future coalition commanders tackle the complex challenges of coalition warfighting.

Providing the combatant commanders with operational-level recommendations is part of the way ahead for improving US/coalition operations in the twenty-first century. The most important step is following through on these recommendations at both the operational and strategic levels.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Recent comments by President George W. Bush's Administration regarding unilateral

military action have drawn the ire of the international community. While the US (United

States) retains the right to act unilaterally, the general opinion of the US security

establishment is that future conflicts will be conducted within the framework of a coalition.

The main reasoning for this belief is the political legitimacy coalitions provide to US military

actions and because they "enhance our military capabilities, and help secure long term

peace."[1] Accordingly, the focus is on coalitions, specifically, operational-level warfighting

in US-led ad hoc coalitions. Operations conducted completely within an alliance structure

such as NATO are outside the scope of this paper.

The nature of the problem is that operational-level commanders have to balance strategic

(political direction), operational (warfighting), and overall force interoperability concerns in

a coalition environment where agreements on standards and procedures do not necessarily

exist. Problems in any one of these three areas can affect the others and impact the

commander's ability to accomplish assigned missions in the most effective manner.

Further examination of the problem generates several questions that need to be addressed

by the US civilian and military leadership: what can the operational commander do to deal

with the multitude of interoperability issues that he will face among his forces; how does he

handle the multinational strategic direction he will be given while trying to conduct combat

operations; how can he best employ his forces to accomplish his assigned missions and

maintain the integrity of the coalition? These questions highlight the lack of universal coalition agreements, standards, and procedures. The point is clear: improvements are needed to increase overall coalition effectiveness and to clarify sensitive issues or areas. This means the operational-level commander does not have to start from scratch in putting together his warfighting coalition. It also reduces the need to establish hasty ad hoc procedures and standards that allow nations to operate crudely within the coalition.

The thesis of the paper is that operational-level improvements to US coalition operations are needed to improve interoperability and ensure that future commanders can conduct effective operations in the twenty-first century. The end product is a list of recommendations that future operational-level commanders should implement, pursue, or consider to reduce friction and improve coalition operations.

The plan of action is twofold: first, identify problem areas in the operational functions through the examination of historical coalition operations; second, analyze these problems and make operational-level recommendations for use by future US military commanders. The recommendations are directed at future operational-level commanders to include: geographic Unified Combatant Commanders (CINC), Joint Task Force (JTF) commanders, functional component commanders, and Corps/MEF level commanders. The operational functions (intelligence, logistics, movement and maneuver, fires, command and control, and protection) will be used as the general framework for examining the historical coalitions and identifying operational issues. The functions are important because they represent major areas that the coalition commander uses to synchronize operational activities as he applies operational art to his campaign or major operation.

CHAPTER 2

OPERATIONAL ISSUES IN HISTORICAL COALITIONS

In order to make recommendations to fix future coalition issues, previous problems must

be identified and examined. One approach is to look at historical coalitions using the

operational functions.

Operational Command and Control (C2)

Unlike US joint operations where unity of command is achievable, coalition operations at

best achieve unity of effort. The reason for this was pointed out by General Jacob L. Devers,

USA, in commenting on his WWII observations:

> The theater commander must bear in mind that he has under command professional
> soldiers and experienced commanders of several nations other than his own, who owe
> their first allegiance to their own governments. . . . It is only natural that
> representatives of another nation will examine critically every directive received and
> decision taken by the theater commander, from the viewpoint of their own national
> aspirations--political, economic, and military.[2]

The point here is that "although coalitions are usually seen as mechanisms for coordinated

military action, they are essentially political."[3] The allegiance of each coalition military

force is to its national leaders first, then to the desires of the coalition leader. This sometimes

means that nations may be pursuing agendas that affect military operations.

C2 problems occurred during the 1991 Gulf War where Western allies and Arab countries

were organized into separate ground elements with separate commanders. The result was

that "command and control of the entire operation was difficult and required two chains of

command that were integrated by the CINC."[4] The CINC personally had to control these

warfighting commands which added work to an already overburdened commander. Some of the reasons for this involved religious and ideological differences within the coalition.

From a C2 communications perspective, there are problems in parity, standards, and interoperability. The Bosnia conflict provides an example as noted in the following quote:

> For the Intervention Force (IFOR) operation, there were independent and separately managed NATO and national voice, message, data, and Video TeleConference (VTC) networks; C4 systems and ISR systems; and so forth. This is simply the reality of coalition operations, with interoperability challenges and security disconnects that need to be dealt with.[5]

Some nations operate separate communication systems while others use network patches to link into US systems. The Gulf War provides an idea of what kind of burden that usually means for the US who typically is required to make the connection: "Attaining technological interoperability will be difficult for coalitions in any case. . . . For example, it required approximately 70 soldiers, 27 tons of equipment, and 80 days of training and coordination to create communication interoperability for an average brigade from the Middle Eastern nations."[6] The US must carefully weigh the added cost and complexity of adding significant numbers of nations to the coalition.

Operational Intelligence

One area that has plagued previous coalitions and does not have a simple fix is intelligence dissemination among member nations. Each nation has its own set of rules to follow and intelligence sources to protect. This is especially difficult when dealing with the sharing of sensitive intelligence. As we found out "in Desert Storm, no preplanned system or mechanism governed the release and dissemination of essential military intelligence other than to traditional allies."[7] This implies that some critical targets may not be attacked and that some intelligence assets may be unnecessarily tasked trying to collect information that is

already known to a member of the coalition. One major concern of intelligence

dissemination is the possibility of security leaks outside the coalition as more countries get

access to the information.

Operational Movement and Maneuver

This function gets at one of the main questions of this paper--should all coalition nations

necessarily be part of the Ground Combat Element (GCE) and participate in warfighting?

Looking at GCE operations during the Gulf War, "Intensive coordination between Coalition

units was required to ensure plans could be executed smoothly. Saudi and other Coalition

units were expected to withdraw through US forces, a complicated maneuver under the best

of conditions. . . . Special staffs and liaison teams were established to coordinate planning."[8]

Conducting ground maneuver safely on a fast moving battlefield is tough--even among US

forces. It becomes exceedingly difficult when nations with different doctrine, language, and

communications attempt to fight integrated or alongside each other. The risk of fratricide

increases exponentially. A specific example of this is the annual Exercise Ulchi Focus Lens

(UFL) in Korea where US and Korean forces, with great difficulty, attempt to coordinate

cross-boundary fires with each other.

Operational Fires

Air is the primary asset used to shape the deep battlespace in advance of ground forces.

These fires are effective and precise but require strict understanding of procedures and a

complete awareness of unit locations within the battlespace. Unfortunate friendly fratricide

incidents involving air reflect the technological difficulties of working with coalition forces

and could impact the stability of the coalition itself. Let's look at two examples: the first was

the incident in Afghanistan where US fighters attacked and killed several Canadian troops on

the ground. The incident is still under investigation but reflects loss of battlefield awareness between the two countries and caused strained international relationships; the second occurred "on 26 February 1991, nine British service members died when US aircraft mistakenly attacked a British armored personnel carrier. . . . Some analysts attributed the incident to . . . the US air-to-ground coordination system. . . . That the coalition did not overtly fracture . . . is testimony to stronger forces that held the group together."[9] Operational fires are absolutely essential to the prosecution of future conflicts but issues involving air-to-ground procedures and battlefield awareness among coalition nations must be further defined and standardized to prevent fratricide.

Operational Logistics

This is an important consideration for the US when building large coalitions. It is generally understood that each nation is responsible for its own logistics. In reality, however, this is not always the case. Operation Restore Hope in Somalia is a good example, here:

> Practically all 24 coalition partners, plus the U.N. command and U.N. civilian agencies, were dependent on the United States for the fuel each car, truck, armored personnel carrier, and aircraft used. Early in the operations, most of these were also receiving U.S.-generated potable water. Over one-third of the countries received meals, ready-to-eat, or MREs, from U.S. forces.[10]

The problem here is that the US usually accrues the additional costs associated with poorer member nations. Besides water, food, and fuel, the costs also include ammunition and communications equipment. The US must carefully weigh the political benefit of having certain nations participate on the ground and the added costs they bring to the coalition.

Operational Protection

The last function to look at historically is operational protection. Arguably, one of the most important responsibilities of a coalition is to protect its forces. One way to do this is by

controlling the air and providing defensive air operations. However, when operating as a

coalition, problems arise and issues take longer to resolve than for the US alone. Here is an

example of the impact from the Gulf War: "When coalition interests diverge, commanders

should anticipate a slow process for agreement upon ROE. In the Gulf, even small

differences in emphasis between British and US political guidance delayed ROE approval,

which impacted air operations."[11] Besides political issues affecting operational protection,

other issues such as "unfamiliar procedures, lack of a common language, and differing

operational terms of reference can increase this risk."[12] The key point is that delays or a lack

of procedures among coalition nations can impact the lives of the forces involved--these

issues should be resolved during peacetime.

CHAPTER 3

ADDITIONAL OPERATIONAL-LEVEL COALITION ISSUES

There are other operational-level problem areas associated with coalitions that deserve attention. Coalitions affect the efficiency of US military operations. History has shown that "coalitions . . . create constraint. Working within a coalition may impose operational restrictions that can reduce the efficiency of the American military instrument; . . . such constraints were most evident in the Kosovo conflict."[13] Despite this apparent problem, political requirements have dictated that essentially any nation can participate in coalitions regardless of the impact they cause on military operations. The individual who usually has to deal with this problem is the combatant commander. Here is how the Gulf War commander viewed this unwelcome requirement: "General Schwarzkopf had to find a way to fit in the allied contributions, which he often saw as militarily superfluous."[14] The question here is: should the US allow nations into a US-led coalition if it will reduce military effectiveness?

Is limiting coalition participation to a select few nations a better solution? Looking at "Afghanistan and the War on Terrorism, . . . when a number of European offers of military participation were turned down, this reduced their sense of political investment."[15] Forcing nations to sit on the sidelines reduces their interest and support. They are more apt to criticize and identify problems regarding the actions of the coalition. The lesson here may be that it is better to have the nations in the coalition than out--but how should they contribute? Do they have to participate in warfighting or can they contribute in some other fashion?

The last issue is why coalitions have such a difficult time operating smoothly? One

reason is that there is "no commonly accepted doctrine for coalition warfare [that] exists

today."[16] The US has learned the hard way that joint doctrine is necessary to synchronize the

actions of the Services. So why would it be any different for a group of nations? General

Riscassi, USA, highlights how difficult it is to arrange coalition operations in time, space,

and purpose:

> Synchronization is perhaps the most difficult tenet to apply in coalition operations.
> . . . It is key to achieving unity and efficiency in action. Yet, in a coalition there are
> great inhibitors to effecting synchronization. Differences in language, technology,
> doctrine, and training act to deter efficiency and increase the potential for friction.[17]

Lack of coalition doctrine is one reason for lack of synchronization; another reason is lack of

interoperability among coalition members. Efforts are underway to improve this area: "Other

initiatives designed to improve coalition interoperability include the creation of a C4ISR

Coalition Interoperability Multinational Working Group (MNWG) with participants from

Australia, Canada, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States."[18] The

obvious problem here is the makeup of the countries involved. All have access to new

technology and funds to purchase new equipment. But what about the third world countries

who are also likely to participate in coalitions? Who is looking out for their interests? Who

is ensuring that future equipment will be affordable and accessible to them?

"Historically, the problems of interoperability have been solved primarily through trial

and error during actual conduct of operations over an extended period of time."[19] But is this

the best way to deal with coalition problems? Should the US be reactive or proactive? Let's

examine some ways we can solve current problems and identify some recommendations to

prevent future problems within coalitions.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYZING THE ISSUES

The objective here is to analyze the issues identified in the previous sections and derive a

set of recommendations that commanders can use to improve their coalition operations.

Operational Command and Control

There are two issues here: the political aspects of coalition C2, and standardization and

interoperability associated with communications. To deal with the first issue, a commander:

> Must first know the several national problems and aspirations in detail before he
> can hope to deal with his commanders. It must be thoroughly appreciated by him that
> no commander, regardless of the position he may occupy in the world of allied
> powers, will submerge his national pride and aspirations for what appears to be the
> benefit of another.[20]

The commander must understand that this may not be optimal but it is reality. Unity of

command will not be achieved. The commander must accept unity of effort and realize that

"coordination and cooperation are the key ingredients to successful coalition command."[21]

The second C2 issue can only be addressed by establishing an international set of

standards for communications interoperability. The idea is to establish a protocol that all

nations can follow and create coalitions that are globally interoperable and not just regionally

interoperable. This plan must also take into account the limited resources that many potential

coalition countries possess. Some coalition nations want to be interoperable but simply

cannot afford it and the US cannot afford to fund them either.

Operational Intelligence

As stated earlier, the dissemination of intelligence to coalition partners is a major obstacle of synchronizing coalition intelligence operations. The US is currently developing a guard system that allows member nations access to certain levels or types of information. This is a step in the right direction but more must be done. "A multinational intelligence center is necessary for consolidating and prioritizing requirements for participating nations."[22] The purpose of this center is to ensure that intelligence is shared and coordinated among member nations to the maximum extent possible. The commander needs to reinforce operational security (OPSEC) issues to all coalition nations and bluntly state that security leaks will not be tolerated.

Operational Movement and Maneuver

There are three warfighting areas to examine: air, naval, and ground maneuver. Air and naval forces have been able to achieve a higher level of interoperability than ground forces:

> Naval forces have in many respects achieved a level of integration unmatched amongst the Services. Most navies subscribe to the Composite Warfare Commander Concept whereby responsibility is delegated to a specific commander for a particular discipline such as Anti-surface warfare or Anti-aircraft warfare. . . . NATO doctrine and procedures have become almost the common currency in multinational operations.[23]

> Unity of air effort is best achieved when command and control is exercised from the highest practicable level by a designated commander. The success of the Joint Force Air Component Commander concept during Desert Storm has proved a system that is capable of commanding an air operation whatever the aircraft's origin.[24]

The primary reason for this is that commonly accepted international standards for air and sea operations already exist. Similar international standards for ground operations do not exist. There are nearly as many ground maneuver doctrines as there are nations. Future commanders need an international ground force doctrine or they should only conduct ground maneuver with forces that follow a common doctrine, such as NATO forces. When it comes

to ground warfighting and maneuver, coalitions should not "create organizations for political purposes whose combat potential is degraded by a lack of interoperability."[25] The objective is to weigh and balance risk. The coalition will still need nations for political legitimacy but perhaps their forces can contribute in some fashion besides ground operations.

Operational Fires

Employing operational fires is critical to success on the battlefield. However, incidents of fratricide are detrimental to coalition stability. Commanders must ensure that doctrine or procedures exist to effect coordination between air and ground elements and that the same doctrine is shared by all coalition nations. Additionally, commanders must make certain that non-US nations are provided Coalition Support Teams (CSTs) or Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (ANGLICO) personnel to effect control and coordination.

Operational Logistics

To overcome the problem of supporting a multitude of member nations with logistics supplies, coalition commanders must state up front that participating nations are responsible for their own logistics. This includes fuel, food, ammunition, and the vehicular movement of supplies and personnel. Failing to achieve this goal, the commander's next step "is to procure stockpiles of critical communications equipment and ammunition . . . to be provided to unknown coalition partners in future contingencies."[26] The key here is to weigh the cost of their support politically versus the cost of their support financially.

Operational Protection

As discussed earlier, delays in decision-making or a lack of procedures can jeopardize the key areas of operational protection: air defense, protecting operational logistics, airspace control, and NBC defense. Size of the coalition influences the speed of the decision: "The

timeliness of decision-making also influences the desirability of coalition operations. . . . The larger and more diverse the coalition, the more ineffective this decision process becomes."[27] To address these problems, commanders must streamline their coalitions in terms of size to increase speed of decision-making. What size coalition enables rapid decision-making is uncertain and requires additional study. Furthermore, commanders must make certain that procedures needed to ensure operational protection are established early and are understood by all.

Having addressed the operational functions, it is now time to analyze some additional issues for further recommendations. The first issue is the role each nation conducts in the coalition. The question here is: should every coalition nation participate in ground warfighting or should each be assigned another non-warfighting role? Many issues regarding problems with warfighting interoperability were discussed previously. They included issues in all the areas of the operational functions. The general assessment seems to indicate that most, if not all, nations should participate in non-warfighting roles. These roles would include: logistics support, financial support, political support, rear area operations, post-conflict occupation duty, and so on. This simplifies coalition operations and, by "giving countries meaningful military roles in the coalition, according to their means, helps solidify their sense of political investment."[28] Warfighting in a US-led coalition would be primarily conducted by US forces. Exceptions might be NATO forces that operate with similar doctrine, language, and equipment--forces that are essentially fully interoperable. This would greatly simplify ground combat and lessen the possibility for friendly fratricide. As discussed earlier, because of the international standards relating to air and sea operations,

most, if not all, nations with air/sea forces would participate in these warfighting operations. The objective here is to keep ground warfighting simple and safe.

Another important issue is coalition doctrine. This is the glue that binds the coalition together and synchronizes the actions of the separate nations. "Since coalition operations will therefore be the most common method for the employment of US forces, the necessary doctrine must be developed."[29] Doctrine reduces the need for ad hoc procedures and increases tempo. An example is joint doctrine and its importance to joint operations and Service actions. If the US plans on fighting as a coalition, why doesn't the US have coalition doctrine? This just reinforces the previous paragraph of fighting separately on the ground. Without coalition doctrine, all the operational functions are affected and efficiency degraded. This should be a top concern of future coalition commanders. The requirement needs to be identified at the operational-level and forwarded to the Joint Staff for action. The only country that can make this happen is the US. The doctrine needs to be developed with the full range of nations in mind--poor and rich. A good starting point would be NATO doctrine.

Finally, doctrine should be tied to the future. Doctrine based on "joint experimentation . . . should lay the groundwork for future multinational interoperability with potential partners."[30] This includes participating in international research and development projects.

One of the toughest challenges for every friendly nation in the world today is trying to maintain technological interoperability with the US. The costs are prohibitive for most third world nations and even for most, if not all, NATO nations. The question here is--should the US press ahead with developing newer technology or hold its current position and allow friendly nations to close the technology gap? The answer is readily apparent: recent conflicts have demonstrated the enormous benefits that new technology has provided to the US.

Advances in intelligence, surveillance, and targeting have limited friendly casualties and

hastened war termination. The US should press ahead with its pursuit of new technology but

bear in mind the requirement for interoperability. The interoperability impact is most

significant for the coalition commander. He has to develop solutions to connect the forces

and accomplish his mission--not an easy task given the significant technological differences.

There are several areas that can help him overcome some of these issues such as "language

training for Liaison Officers [LNOs], targeted foreign military sales and security assistance,

and combined exercises can all promote interoperability with potential coalition partners."[31]

For the combatant commander, one of these areas should be particularly developed: the

> Need to examine the requirement for sophisticated liaison personnel--officers, noncommissioned officers, and civilians--in the active and reserve components. . . . Their skills would include language . . . cultural and historical understanding . . . regional geostrategic and geopolitical matters; knowledge of key regional alliances; awareness of new and emerging technologies; . . . U.S. capabilities in strategic communications, logistics, transportation, and sustainment.[32]

These LNOs need to be focused regionally and long-term--perhaps their entire careers.

Now that key coalition issues have been identified and analyzed, it is time to propose

operational-level recommendations for improving future operations.

CHAPTER 5

OPERATIONAL-LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

The operational-level recommendations developed in this paper for use by future coalition commanders are listed below. They are drawn from the analysis of previously discussed historical coalition problems. Keep in mind that many of these recommendations will require extensive coordination at the strategic level by the combatant commander or his staff.

1. Limit the number of coalition partners that participate to those nations that add value and contribute to the accomplishment of the mission. During mission analysis, identify essential tasks for coalition nations and limit participation to nations who can fulfill one of these tasks.

2. Accept unity of effort for C2. Understand the goals and desires of the nations involved and through cooperation vice command direct them towards a common goal.

3. In the interim, use regional military doctrine or technology standards (such as NATO) to achieve some level of coalition interoperability. For the future, commanders must demand that the Department of Defense (DOD) move towards globally accepted coalition doctrine and technology standards--to include the US.

4. Establish a multinational intelligence center to coordinate and prioritize information requirements and ensure adequate dissemination of intelligence to member nations.

5. Until coalition doctrine is established, limit non-US forces to non-warfighting tasks or participation in air and sea operations. Ground warfighting should be conducted by US forces only or with forces having similar doctrine, language, and C2 interoperability.

6. Ensure all non-US nations have ANGLICO or CST support to prevent fratricide, coordinate operations, and ensure communications interoperability.

7. Require all coalition nations to provide their own logistics support.

8. Develop alert mechanisms prior to hostilities to expedite any issues relating to operational protection such as ROE, NBC defense, airspace control, and so on.

9. Work closely with Joint Forces Command to make sure operational coalition requirements are identified, Mission Needs Statements submitted, experimentation conducted, and international R&D explored to improve interoperability across the spectrum. Incorporate coalition operations into OPLANs and Theater Security Cooperation Plans to improve future interoperability. Additionally, this allows the US to assess coalition forces, identify tasks they are capable of accomplishing, and establishing plans to raise their level of training.

10. Combatant commanders should pursue establishing a permanent set of regional LNOs that specialize in language, culture, history, regional strategy and politics, and US strategic capabilities to enable them to work closely with regional partners to further US interests.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

The overall objective of this study was to identify operational-level recommendations for the future coalition commander--that was accomplished. These recommendation will help him prepare for probably the most challenging assignment any commander can face--trying to accomplish a mission with foreign forces over which he does not have unity of command.

So why care about coalition operations? Sun Tzu discussed the importance when he wrote: "Know your enemy and know your allies."[33] Commanders need to understand the capabilities and limitations of member nations to ensure they are employed properly within their abilities. Through insight and understanding of member nations, commanders can follow Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's guidance: "So my view is you have to let the mission determine the coalition, and you don't let the coalition determine the mission."[34]

Commanders have an extremely difficult task building and maintaining coalitions because nearly everything is done ad hoc. This is not the preferred method since "interoperability, mutual confidence, and success cannot be obtained on the brink of a conflict, nor can they be achieved by a sudden and improvised effort."[35] The DOD can greatly assist the commander by developing the groundwork today and ensuring much of the interoperability is established in advance. This initial effort hasn't been accomplished yet and "the principal historical reason for this lack of interoperability is that no one had the clout or chose to exercise that clout to assure that operability was achieved."[36] Few leaders have that clout and those that do have elected not to exercise it. As the US learned the value of joint doctrine for US

warfighting, it will eventually see the value of coalition doctrine for coalition warfighting. It

will take a leader with vision and clout to make this a reality.

As the US military transforms to address the future, coalition partners will face increased

difficulties fighting alongside the US military. Many nations will not be able to equip

themselves with the latest military technology due to limited resource availability. Despite

all the problems that lay ahead, the mission must still be accomplished. One US leader with

extensive coalition experience, General Anthony Zinni, USMC, summed it up well:

> [Are these coalition forces] always the best? No. Always exactly configured right
> for the operation? No. Always there to operate with the same objectives as you? No.
> Always completely interoperable with your command and way of doing business and
> your doctrine, your tactics, and your techniques? No. Always technically and
> procedurally the same as you? No.
> They come from a world that grew up in a different doctrinal system; they come
> with different political motivations; they come with different rules of engagement. . . .
> And yet you've got to pull these kinds of forces together and get a mission
> accomplished and make sure everyone goes home feeling good about what they did.[37]

So what makes a coalition commander successful? How can he overcome the numerous

interoperability problems that have been brought to light? Sometimes to see the future, one

must look to the past. Perhaps the experience of one of the most successful coalition

commanders in history, General Dwight Eisenhower, USA, can give us some insight:

> Eisenhower's uncompromising fairness in all of his command decisions assured
> each of the coalition partners that none of them would be overpowered by the wishes
> of the 'senior partner.' By scrupulously avoiding favoring one nation over another
> and strictly adhering to the common objectives of the allied cause, Ike was able to
> build confidence in his judgment and fairness which manifested itself as 'a degree of
> closeness and maturity in political and military matters never before attained' in such
> a coalition. He was seen, in short, as an allied leader, not an American one.[38]

Maybe this is the attitude and direction future US coalition commanders need to take.

NOTES

[1] Andrew J. Pierre, "Coalitions, Building and Maintenance," (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, 2002), ix.

[2] Jacob L. Devers, "Major Problems Confronting a Theater Commander in Combined Operations," <u>Military Review</u> (January-February 1997): 124.

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